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Report of the Executive Board of the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women on the work of its second session**

Summary

The Executive Board of the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women held its second session at United Nations Headquarters on 1 June 2005. The agenda of the session included a review of the implementation of the programme of work during the period October 2004-May 2005; the presentation of the proposed workplan and operational budget for 2006; and consideration of matters related to fund-raising activities.

The Executive Board: took note with appreciation of the report of the Director on the implementation of the programme of work for the period October 2004-May 2005 and expressed its satisfaction with the results achieved in so few months; approved the proposed workplan and endorsed the operational budget for 2006 and agreed to consider possible recommendations to be submitted to the General Assembly regarding financial support for the Institute; agreed on the importance of seeking medium-term sustainable financial resources for INSTRAW and requested the Director of the Institute, in consultation with the United Nations Secretariat and the President of the Board, to prepare a detailed report, including actions that can be taken by the Board and proposals for alternative mechanisms for fund-raising activities; and decided to hold a resumed second session in October 2005 to analyse in more detail proposals aimed at achieving the medium- and long-term sustainability of the Institute and to consider its recommendations to be submitted to the sixtieth session of the General Assembly.

* E/2005/100.

** This document was submitted late to conference services because the second session of the Executive Board was held only recently, on 1 June 2005.

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I. Organization of the session

1. The session was attended by the following members of the Executive Board of the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW): Burkina Faso; Czech Republic; El Salvador; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Italy; Mexico; Nigeria; Philippines; Romania and Spain.

2. Also in attendance at this session were the following ex officio members: the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs; the Director of INSTRAW; and the representative of the Dominican Republic (host country). The Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women also attended the session.

3. In accordance with article IV, rule 14, of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board of INSTRAW, the officers elected at the Board's first session, on 27 July 2004, continue in their functions during this second year of their terms. The officers are as follows: President: Spain; and Vice-Presidents: El Salvador (also serving as Rapporteur) and the Philippines.

Opening statements

4. The session was opened by the President of the INSTRAW Executive Board, who welcomed members to the second session. He stressed the Institute's achievements thus far in fund-raising. He also reminded members of the Board that the financial situation of the Institute remained fragile. He encouraged members of the Board to consider fresh initiatives and ways to ensure a stable financial situation of the Institute.

5. The Director of INSTRAW briefed the members of the Board on the Institute's programmes and activities and thanked them for their continued support for the Institute. She paid special tribute to the Governments of Italy, Mexico and Spain for their financial support.

Adoption of the agenda

6. The Executive Board adopted the agenda for the session.

II. Deliberations of the Executive Board

A. Progress report on the implementation of the programme of work for the period October 2004-May 2005

7. The Executive Board had before it the report on the implementation of the programme of work for the period October 2004-May 2005, which was introduced by the Director.

8. She began by informing the Board that the report had been elaborated in line with the implementation of the workplan and operational budget for 2005, approved by the Board at its resumed first session on 1 October 2004, and the strategic framework for 2004-2007.

9. Under strategic objective 1, research, the Director briefly presented some of the achievements under each of the five priority areas.

10. For migration-related issues (remittances, trafficking), the following activities were highlighted: (a) the development of a conceptual framework for gender and remittances; (b) participation in the Inter-American Development Bank seminar (28-30 June 2005) with a session on gender and remittances; (c) the preparation of project proposals for case studies in the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, the Philippines and in Eastern Europe, and on groups of migrant women in Italy and Spain; and (d) the preparation of project proposals on the trafficking of women and girls in the Caribbean.

11. Activities undertaken in the area of information and communication technologies and women's empowerment included: (a) the preparation of a project proposal for the empowerment of indigenous women through access to information and communication technologies; and (b) the development of a new website section on information and communication technologies and women's empowerment.

12. Within the priority area of security and gender, the following activities were mentioned: (a) two e-discussions on gender and security sector reform and on gender and conflict prevention; (b) the INSTRAW workshop entitled "What next? Research and training for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325"; (c) the presentation of the statement to the Security Council on 28 October 2004; (d) the development of a new website section on gender and security sector reform; and (e) the preparation of a project proposal on improving the physical security of vulnerable Haitian women in the Dominican Republic in partnership with the World Food Programme.

13. Regarding women's political participation, the following activities were highlighted: (a) a project proposal to be funded by the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation (AECI) entitled "Strengthening governance with a gender perspective and the participation of women at the local level"; (b) a meeting with ministers for women's/gender affairs from Central American countries, Mexico and the Andean region to discuss and receive inputs to the project; (c) the preparation of a project proposal on women's political participation in the Maghreb region; and (d) a new website section on women's political participation to be launched by the end of June 2005.

14. The Director informed the Board of plans for a new INSTRAW series of papers entitled "New voices — new perspectives". This series will provide an opportunity for students enrolled in gender-related programmes to contribute to global debates and to the communal sphere of knowledge on women's and gender issues. The Board was informed that a call for papers in the five strategic areas of the 2005 work programme had recently been launched and that some 45 abstracts had been received from countries in all world regions. All papers selected for the series will be published online, while three will be published in print format.

15. Under strategic objective 2, information and communication, the Director highlighted: (a) the preparation of a series of overview reports covering each of the 12 critical areas of the Beijing Platform for Action;[1] (b) the development of a website section covering the Beijing review process in all world regions; (c) the INSTRAW magazine, recently launched on the Institute's website, which contains opinion pieces, interviews and relevant news items on gender issues worldwide; and

[1] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

(d) an agreement reached with the Organisation internationale de la francophonie to review and translate all INSTRAW materials into French.

16. Among the activities implemented under strategic objective 3, capacity-building, the Director highlighted: (a) the expansion of the website section on gender training materials and tools for gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment; (b) the finalization of a manual for home-based caregivers for patients with HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa; and (c) collaboration with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in activities to update a gender training package.

17. During the period under review, the Board was informed of numerous activities related to the implementation of strategic objective 4, institutional development. Among them were: (a) interviews with authorities in donor countries; (b) the participation of INSTRAW staff in high-level discussions, presentations and relevant international events; (c) the strengthening of networks with civil society and academia; (d) the development of 16 project proposals and 10 project profiles for all regions within the strategic areas of the Institute; (e) the reactivation of the internship programme with the simultaneous participation of four to five interns and one United Nations Volunteer; and (f) agreements on collaboration reached with a number of entities, including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, IDB, the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization, UNESCO, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the United Nations Office for Project Services, the United Nations Online Network in Public Administration and Finance and the World Food Programme. The agreement with UNESCO includes partnership with INSTRAW in the establishment of a Palestinian Women's Centre.

18. Regarding the website, the Director informed the Board that there had been a significant increase in hits (52 per cent) and downloads (380 per cent) since the baseline was established in September 2004. She also provided information on the significant increase in visits to specific website sections, such as gender mainstreaming, research, remittances and the press room. During the month of March, 52 per cent of hits/downloads were not traceable by country of origin. Of those identified, 45 per cent came from developing countries, while 55 per cent were from developed countries.

19. The Board reviewed the financial situation of the Institute, including the decision of the General Assembly to provide the Institute with $1,092,400 to be used should there be a shortage of voluntary contributions for the functioning of the Institute in 2005. The Director provided information on the contributions from 1 January (through May 2005) amounting to $46,895 and of pledges received (as of May 2005) in the amount of $830,000.

20. Following the presentation, the members of the Board noted with appreciation the efforts made by the Institute over the past few months with limited resources. It approved the central themes of the work programme and noted that they were in line with the priorities established in the strategic framework. *Moreover, the* Board members were pleased that the Institute had been able to quickly position itself favourably in major issues where a gender perspective needed to be integrated. The Board also noted that the Institute was working in close coordination with the United Nations system, thereby avoiding duplication of activities.

21. The Board agreed that migration-related issues, such as remittances, were indeed timely and relevant for all regions. In this regard, Board members requested the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat to invite INSTRAW to collaborate in activities for the session of the Commission on Population and Development to be held in 2006, and for the "High-level dialogue of the General Assembly on international migration" to be held in 2006.

22. INSTRAW activities related to the preparation of projects on the trafficking of women and girls and to HIV/AIDS were also welcomed by the Board.

23. Board members also expressed their satisfaction with the Institute's website, and in particular with its multilingual and information-sharing approach, thereby making important information on gender issues accessible to all world regions.

24. The Board decided to take note with appreciation of the report presented by the Director and expressed its satisfaction for the results achieved in so few months.

B. Proposed programme of work and operational budget for 2006

25. The Board had before it the proposed workplan and operational budget for 2006, which was introduced by the Director.

26. The Director informed the Board that the proposed workplan and operational budget had been prepared on the following bases: (a) the distribution of resources was calculated by costing the activities in the workplan for each of the expected accomplishments of the strategic plan; (b) a minimum infrastructure is maintained to allow the Institute to operate; (c) results justify the maintenance of approved posts; and (d) resource mobilization is a priority in order to seek core and extrabudgetary funding.

27. For strategic objective 1, research, the Director mentioned selected outputs, including: (a) research activities promoted through the INSTRAW website in new areas such as (i) the empowerment of women and poverty alleviation at the local level; (ii) the trafficking of women and girls; (iii) environment, gender and conflict; (b) eight studies on strategic areas already identified in the strategic framework posted on the INSTRAW website and disseminated through mailing lists and networks; (c) three studies to promote gender-responsive policies and the empowerment of women in strategic areas published and disseminated; (d) one comprehensive report and 10 case studies on women's political participation at the local level in Central America, Mexico and the Andean region (as extrabudgetary funding becomes available); and (e) at least three case studies developed on gender and remittances.

28. Under strategic objective 2, information and communication, the Director highlighted the following selected outputs: (a) the INSTRAW website providing up-to-date information on priority areas for gender mainstreaming and the empowerment of women translated into other languages; (b) gender-related information posted on the website, organized and categorized by themes and geographic regions; (c) materials and resources provided to stakeholders for gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment developed by INSTRAW; (d) information disseminated through the INSTRAW magazine and in newsletters packaged for different users; (e) information on governance and women's political participation at the local level worldwide disseminated to promote experiences,

dialogue and relevant discussion on those issues (as extrabudgetary funding becomes available from AECI); and (f) dissemination of reports, studies, lessons learned and other relevant information on women's political participation at the local level (as extrabudgetary funding becomes available from AECI).

29. Selected outputs highlighted for strategic objective 3, capacity-building/training, included: (a) the development and dissemination of training programmes, materials and tools (including a roster of training institutes) for gender mainstreaming and the empowerment of women; (b) the development and dissemination of training materials in strategic areas through the INSTRAW website; (c) identification and promotion of best practices and experiences on mainstreaming gender in curricular and other training activities; (d) strengthening or creation of networking to support the processes of governance with a gender perspective and women's political participation at the local level in Central America, Mexico and the Andean region (as extrabudgetary funding becomes available from the AECI); and (e) the development of e-training materials on gender mainstreaming or women's empowerment by INSTRAW in collaboration with other partners (as extrabudgetary funding becomes available).

30. Under strategic objective 4, institutional development, the Director mentioned the following selected outputs: (a) the development of project proposals and submission for extrabudgetary funding; (b) continued adherence to the results-based management approach; and (c) fund-raising activities implemented towards achieving sustainability for the core budget and for special projects.

31. In conclusion, the Director pointed out that the budget for 2006 had been prepared at a level commensurate with the amount of funds utilized for the Institute's operations during 2005. However, the total amount of the proposed budget for 2006 presented an 11 per cent increase over the 2005 budget due to increases in the cost of living in the host country.

32. The Board made some minor technical modifications to the workplan and operational budget for 2006.

33. The Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs made a statement in which he pointed out that the most challenging and crucial task of the Board at this session is how to help the Institute position itself on a more stable financial footing so that it can continue its particular efforts to promote the advancement of women, especially as agents and beneficiaries of economic and social development. He added that the Board should consider actions aimed at guaranteeing the medium-term sustainability of INSTRAW. He said that in his capacity as Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, he could assure that the Department would continue to support the Institute and its Board. He looked forward to the establishment by the Institute of an equally productive collaboration with the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women, who also works closely with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

34. The Board noted with satisfaction that the contributions received in 2005 and the pledges, if received, may allow the Institute to meet most resource requirements for 2005. At the same time, the Board stressed the continued fragility of the financial situation of INSTRAW and expressed concern regarding the financing of the workplan and operational budget for 2006.

35. The Board decided to approve the workplan and to endorse the operational budget for 2006, subject to the availability of sufficient financial resources, and agreed to consider possible recommendations to be submitted to the General Assembly regarding financial support for the Institute at its resumed second session, to be held in October 2005.

C. Matters relating to fund-raising activities

36. The Board had before it a conference room paper on fundraising activities, which was introduced by the Director.

37. The Director informed the Board that in order to allow the Institute to fulfil its mandate in working towards the achievement of gender equality and the advancement of women worldwide, it was essential that the INSTRAW trust fund have a reserve. Such a reserve would allow for medium- and long-term planning and greater outreach of its activities. In line with the Institute's statutes regarding the role of members of the Executive Board in terms of enhancing the financial resources of the Institute, possible actions for fund-raising were submitted for consideration.

38. The Board reaffirmed the importance of fund-raising issues for medium- and long-term sustainability, as mentioned by the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs.

39. Members of the Board emphasized the important role to be played by the Executive Board of INSTRAW in connection with fund-raising activities, as stipulated in the INSTRAW statute.

40. Board members requested that the Director of INSTRAW provide additional information on mechanisms related to fund-raising in order to further analyse the issue and take appropriate decisions. It was suggested that this information might be reviewed along with relevant paragraphs of the statutes related to the rules for receiving funding.

41. Board members suggested that the Institute might approach the private sector for funding, including, for example, such institutions as the Global Compact.

42. Noting the importance of seeking medium-term sustainable resources for INSTRAW, the Board requested that the Director, in consultation with the United Nations Secretariat and the President of the Board, prepare a detailed report that would include actions that could be taken by the Board and proposals for alternative mechanisms for fund-raising activities.

43. The Board decided to hold a resumed session in October 2005 in order to review fund-raising activities with a view to guaranteeing medium-term sustainability for INSTRAW and enhancing the role of the Board. At its resumed session, the Board will also consider its recommendations to be submitted to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session in support of INSTRAW. The Board also decided to invite the Controller of the United Nations to participate in the deliberations of the resumed session.

III. Closing of the session

44. The President of the Board informed the members that the date of the resumed session would be communicated to them at a later stage and closed the session.